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A TRIBUTE TO
MR. JOSEPH G. BROWN

ADDRESS

of

CHIEF JUSTICE W. P. STACY

BEFORE THE BARACA-WESLEY CLASS

of

EDENTON STREET METHODIST SUNDAY SCHOOL

RALEIGH, N. C.

SUNDAY MORNING
FEBRUARY 6, 1927

On Sunday, February 6, 1927, Chief Justice W. P. Stacy, in his address to the Baraca-Wesley Class of Edenton Street Sunday School, paid tribute to the life and service of Mr. Joseph G. Brown. This address, and many other tributes to Mr. Brown coming from Edenton Street Church and Sunday School, have been published in a single volume. The address printed here is a reprint from this book. Copies of the book may be secured from the pastor's office.

Edenton Street Methodist Church

Raleigh, N. C.

Dear Friend:

In the death of Mr. Joseph G. Brown, on January 30, 1927, Edenton Street Methodist Church, Raleigh, and its allied organizations, as well as the entire community, suffered a distinct loss. For more than fifty years he had been identified with this church and for many years had been its consecrated and constructive leader. Since his death many beautiful and worthy tributes have been paid to his life and service by representatives of its various organizations and resolutions adopted by these organizations. Typical of these tributes is the address of Chief Justice W. P. Stacy before the Baraca-Wesley Class on Sunday, February 6, 1927. This address has been printed and we are enclosing you a copy.

It soon became apparent that there was a desire to have these resolutions and addresses compiled and printed in a single volume. A committee representing the Baraca-Wesley Class, the Sunday School as a whole, and the Board of Stewards for the entire membership of the Church, was appointed to accomplish this service.

The Committee is pleased to announce that these inspiring addresses and resolutions have been collected and printed in an attractive volume, containing a splendid picture of Mr. Brown, and are ready for delivery.

As only a limited number of these volumes were printed, and may be had for $1.00, which represents the actual cost of printing, you should secure your copy at once, at the Church office, Alfred Williams Book Store, Thiem's Book Store, or Pescud's Book Store.

Respectfully,

THE COMMITTEE.

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ADDRESS OF CHIEF JUSTICE W. P. STACY BEFORE THE BARACA-WESLEY CLASS

(The International Uniform Sunday School Lesson for the day was The Parable of the Talents.)

The scene of our lesson is the Mount of Olives. Those present are the disciples and Jesus of Nazareth. St. Matthew records that the disciples came to Him privately. They said to Him (stating it in my own language): "Master, tell us something more about this doctrine of immortality which you have been teaching us. Is it really true that we shall live hereafter? If you are going away (and you say you are), and you expect to return, what sign shall be given to us of your second coming? What token shall we look for which will denote the end of the world?" As was His custom, He answered the disciples in parables, first using the parable of the fig tree and then the parable of the ten virgins, and thirdly, the parable of the talents.

The time is but a short while before His crucifixion. "For the Kingdom of Heaven," He says, "is as a man traveling into a far country" (the word "man" there refers to the Man from Galilee) "who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another, one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

"Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise, he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord's money.

"After a long time, the lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them."

You remember the remainder of the parable with respect to the servants who had been given the five talents and the two talents, and the encomium, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant"; and also with respect to the one who had been given one talent and

used it not. I should like for us to get the view and the significance of the words uttered. I think I do no violence to the understanding of some when I say that this passage of scripture has been widely misinterpreted. Mind you, He starts out by saying: "The Kingdom of Heaven"—not Heaven, but its kingdom—"is as a man traveling into a far country." (He, Himself, was to take His long journey pretty soon.) And he calls about him his servants and delivers to them certain talents according to their several abilities. And after a long time the lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them. You recognize at once that the emphasis here is placed upon the use of the talents, and whether or not the holders of those talents have increased them and added to their worth. You are all familiar, no doubt, with the debate as to whether the Man from Galilee made any contribution to the Kingdom of Heaven by His coming to earth, exercising divinity itself, and then returning. In other words, the debate has been as to whether a man, being divine already, could, by the assumption of human form, add anything to his own divinity.

That question need not trouble us, nor is it difficult of solution. It is not a question of whether He, by assuming finite form, made any contribution to the Kingdom of Heaven, but whether *we* shall make any contribution.

The desire for immortality (and that's the lesson of the talents) is as universal as the race. It furnishes the incentive for every code of morals and the inspiration for every system of religious faith. The Indian longs for his "happy hunting ground"; the orthodox Jew contemplates restful repose upon Abraham's bosom, and the devout Christian, with ears of faith, listens for the plaudit, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Without this belief in and desire for immortality men might well question the fruitfulness of the use of the talents which have been given to them. Take away from men their belief in immortality and you have but a sordid purpose, but a material end to be achieved, and a weak will to serve. Indeed, the will to live itself would be greatly lessened. But a man may by his own efforts, and by the manner

of the use of the talents which have been given to him, determine in a measure the character and the content of his own immortality. The use which he shall make of the talents entrusted to him is the contribution which he shall make to the Kingdom of Righteousness. And above all, no man wants to fail in the responsibility of deserving.

There is a divine purpose running through the lives of men. And of however little moment my existence or my being here may be to others, I can but think that it is in accord with the purpose of the universe, and every man must render in the end an accounting of his stewardship.

To every man upon this earth death comes, soon or late. It is but a part of life itself—it is but a continuation of that which has already begun. The Grim Reaper is no respecter of persons. He calls with equal tread at the cottage gate and the palace door. The high and the low, the young and the old, he visits them all. He presses their eyelids down with dreamless slumber and they sleep with the hush of the generations.

On last Sunday, in this very building, the Messenger of Death summoned our beloved Superintendent from the work he loved the best and decreed for him that his days here should be no more. But our friend is not dead; he is only gone to take his place in the schools above, there to mingle with the spirits of just men, made perfect. As long as the spire of this church shall point upward, and as long as men, women, and children shall attend Edenton Street Sunday School, he will ever live in the hearts of his countrymen, for even in the kingdom of childhood, and with those who would come to this place that they might know something of the teachings of the Master, as he himself glimpsed bits of the truth and transmitted them to his associates and to his students, he was building a monument more lasting than marble and more enduring than bronze.

Raleigh is a better place for his having lived in it. Banking in this community is safer because of the use of his talents in that

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field. Yea, the religious life of this community is richer, and men go about their work, to their places of business, with a feeling of greater security because he labored here.

There was about him the meed of gentleness and the fruit of strength; the courage of the true and the stamina of the great; the heritage of the meek and the harvest of the bold. Truly, a noble soul! Which element predominated we scarcely know. He gave a helping hand to all sorts and conditions of men. And long may it remain in this mixed world a moot question, or at least a point not easy of decision, which is the more beautiful evidence of the Almighty's goodness, the delicate fingers that are formed for sensitiveness and sympathy of touch and made to minister to pain and grief, or the strong masculine hand that the heart teaches, guides, and softens in a moment.

Many of you remember him just two weeks ago standing on this platform, speaking to you, preaching the gospel which he had preached for more than a half century in this building, the gospel of simple, right, and honest dealing. The worth of such a man cannot be measured by any yardstick known to us. Words themselves are but feeble instruments to convey the meaning of a great life—and it is a serious matter when a great life goes out! Some of you know that in the great financial centers of this country, where men deal in large denominations, the opinion and word of Joseph G. Brown were like current coin, because those men had learned to know that whenever he made a statement, it was true; and the credit of the State of North Carolina has been enhanced by his character and integrity. Not only that, but throughout the length and breadth of this commonwealth and beyond its borders, men and women owe their conception of right to his teaching. You approve or condemn the conduct of your neighbor according to your estimate of right, and your neighbor approves or condemns your conduct according to his estimate of right, the correctness of the judgment in each case depending upon the correctness of the standard by which it is made. As thus understood, human judgment imposes an universal obligation. It is as much a duty

to see that right judgment is rendered to your neighbor as it is to demand it for yourself, and to fail in either is an immoral act.

Our friend was a delightful companion and a man wholly without guile. It was good to be in his presence. There is no wealth comparable to that of loyal comradeship. It is the divine gift that makes the poor man rich, and without which the master of a world would be poor indeed. He believed in a gospel of justice, in a religion of morality, and in the efficacy of instant reliance on a Greater Power. This was the real source of his strength and effectiveness. "No man has earned the right to intellectual ambition who has not learned to lay his course by a star which he has never seen, to dig by a divining rod for springs which he may never reach." Four-square to every wind that blew, he was the soul of honor, high-minded, straightforward, clean-cut, and withal a great-hearted fighter for the right. The lives of many have been enriched by the rare charm of his friendship, and in the hearts of those who knew him best his immortality will abide.

Great is the reward of a life well spent, and its usefulness is not lost in the democracy of death. There is an indescribable essence or something that lives on. It refuses to die in the hour of darkened shades and in the evening of twilight shadows. From the grave, where "Victors' wreaths and monarchs' gems all blend in common dust," it flies away and becomes an asset of priceless measure—the full sheaves of a golden harvest.

Our friend is dead, but the value of his friendship still lives. His lips are voiceless, but his immortality still speaks. His work on earth is done, but the influence of his life lives on.

> "Death is the veil which
> Those who live call life;
> They sleep, and it is lifted."

Such is the parable of the talents.